

# Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

To the Council of the Borough of Bridgnorth.

GENTLEMEN,—

## NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area in acres	3,018
Population at census 1921	5,141
Population estimated for 1925	4,968

## PHYSICAL FEATURES.

The Borough of Bridgnorth is situated on the River Severn, and is divided by that river. It consists of four Parishes—St. Leonard, St. Mary Magdalene, Quatford and Quatt Jarvis, the two former being mainly urban, and the two latter rural in character. The Town proper is divided into the High Town and the Low Town. The High Town is situated on a sandstone rock, 250ft. above sea level, on the West bank of the river, and the Low Town 130ft. above sea level, mainly on the East Bank.

Number of families or separate occupiers at census of 1921	1,301.
Number of inhabited houses 1921	1,275.
Rateable Value and sum represented by a Penny Rate are respectively	£24,048 and £91.

Bridgnorth is a centre for a large agricultural district, and a weekly Market is held in the High Street on Saturdays, and a fortnightly Stock Market in the Smithfield.

The principal industries are carpet-weaving, yarn-spinning, and silk and cotton printing.

These occupations do not appear to have any special influence on public health.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

Births in year 1925:—

	Total.	M.	F.	Birth Rate
Legitimate	68	38	30	14.69
Illegitimate	5	2	3	

Deaths in year 1925:—

	Total.	M.	F.	Death Rate
	63	35	34	13.88

Number of women dying in or in consequence of child birth

From Sepsis	None
From other causes	None

Deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 births:

Deaths from Measles...	None
Deaths from Whooping Cough...	None
Deaths from Diarrhoea, under 2 yrs.	None
Unusual or excessive mortality...	None

## POOR LAW RELIEF.

The cost of Poor Law Relief for the Borough of Bridgnorth is about £537 16s. 0d

**HOSPITAL.**—The Bridgnorth and South Shropshire Infirmary has 32 beds for the treatment of in-patients, and has also an out-patient department. The number of beds is barely sufficient for the needs of this district

**NOTEWORTHY CAUSES OF SICKNESS OR INVALIDITY.**—There have been five cases of Enteric Fever in the five years, an average of one case per annum. This compares with an average of three cases per annum for the previous 20 years.

Three of the five cases were due to Bac. Typhosus, one to Bac. Paratyphosus B, and in one case blood tests were negative. There appeared to be no connection between any of the five cases. In two cases a possible source of infection was discovered, and in the other three no definite source of infection was traced. Two cases occurred in 1923, two in 1924, and one in 1925.

## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA. HOSPITALS PROVIDED OR SUBSIDIZED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

(1) Tuberculosis. There is a County Sanatorium at Shirlett.

(2) Maternity. None.

(3) Children. None

(4) Fever. There is an Isolation Hospital on the Grove. This is mainly used for the treatment of Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria cases, but has also been used occasionally for the treatment of Enteric Fever and other diseases. There is accommodation for 17 patients.

(5) Smallpox. Isolation of Smallpox is provided for at a County Council Hospital at Wellington.

There is no Institutional Provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, and homeless children in the District other than the Bridgnorth Union Infirmary.

## AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

(a) Infectious cases are conveyed to the Isolation Hospital by ambulance.

(b) There is an Ambulance lent to the Borough and District by the Red Cross Society.

## CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

There is a Child Welfare Centre supported by voluntary contributions and subsidized by the Council and the Ministry of Health. This is also used as a centre for after-care and treatment by the Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital, and by the County Tuberculosis Officer once a month.

## PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Medical Officer of Health, part time.

Sanitary Inspector, whole time.

## PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

(a) General. The Bridgnorth and District Nursing Association maintains two nurses in the Borough, and there is one District Nurse residing in Alveley (Rural District) who attends patients in Quatt (Urban and Rural).

(b) For Infectious Diseases. Arrangements can be made through the County Medical Officer of Health for visits by a nurse during epidemics of Measles, etc, and in cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

## MIDWIVES.

Maternity cases are attended by the District Nurses. There is one Midwife practising in the District. There is no subsidy by the Public Health Authority. Maternity cases are admitted to the Bridgnorth and South Shropshire Infirmary.

## CHEMICAL WORK.

Arrangements are in force for chemical analyses of water, etc, by the County Analyst.

## LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

Bye-laws are in force with regard to Nuisances, Cleansing of Footways, Slaughter-houses and Common Lodging Houses. These have all been in force previous to 1921.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

**WATER.**—There is a dual supply of water to the Town. For drinking purposes water is obtained from a spring in Oldbury Wells, and supplied to the Town by means of stand-pipes. The spring is enclosed and the water conveyed to the Town in pipes. There has been an abundant supply of this water. For other domestic and general purposes water is obtained from the River Severn, above the Town, and after being passed through a battery of four Candy filters, is pumped up to filtering beds, and a Reservoir on Bromley Hill. After filtration through sand filters it is treated with Chloros by an automatic drip feed, and is supplied directly to the houses in the Town. The supply is continuous, and is sufficient for the needs of the Town. The River Severn is liable to contamination by an effluent from the Town Mills, a quarter of a mile above the intake of the Waterworks, by the River Worfe and the Cantreyn Brook. The proximity of the Town Mills effluent and the Worfe Stream renders it desirable in my opinion that the intake of the Waterworks should be removed to a higher point in the River Severn.

In the Rural part of the Borough houses are supplied by private wells and springs.

**RIVERS AND STREAMS.**—The River Severn is liable to pollution, as stated, above and below the Town by sewage from the South end of High Town and Low Town, which discharge directly into it. The Cantreyn Brook receives the effluent from the sewage works at the North end of the Town.

**DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.**—Drainage and sewage from the North end of the High Town are treated at a sewage plant which discharges its effluent into the Cantreyn Brook.

That from the Low Town and South end of High Town are discharged directly into the River Severn below the Town.

In the Rural part of the Borough vault privies and earth closets are in use, and are emptied by the tenants.

**CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.**—In the Town proper accommodation is by water-closet, except in Fonudry Yard, where pail closets are in use.





SCAVENGING.—Public scavenging is undertaken by the Sanitary Authority. Tins and receptacles are regularly and systematically emptied. Refuse is disposed of at a tip by the Northgate Sewage Works for the High Town, and on the Grove for the Low Town.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.—A report by the Sanitary Inspector is appended.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS OR REGULATIONS.—There is one common lodging house.

#### HOUSING.

##### I. GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE AREA.

(1) General Housing Conditions in the Town are about the average of that prevailing in the County. The most noteworthy feature of the working-class housing is that a certain number of these houses have been built against the sandstone rock on which the High Town stands, and it is almost impossible to alter them so as to obtain adequate through ventilation.

(2) (a) Extent of shortage or excess of houses.—In 1921 the census returns show 1,307 occupiers or families and only 1,275 inhabited houses, a shortage of 32. The population of the Borough in 1921 was 5,141, and is estimated to have fallen to 4,968 in 1925, so that housing accommodation would appear to be relatively better in 1925 than in 1921.

(b) In this period 33 new houses have been erected, and 3 houses which were closed during this period have been re-conditioned and the closing order determined. Although the number of houses is probably now equal to the number of families, there is still need for new working-class houses, as there are a number of houses now occupied which should be closed if better accommodation could be found for the present occupiers.

(3) Changes in population. There has apparently been a steady dwindling of the population, and as the birth-rate is also falling and there are no new industries in the town, this will probably continue.

##### II. OVERCROWDING.

(1) At the 1921 census the amount of overcrowding in two-roomed dwellings was 55 per cent., in three-roomed dwellings 72 per cent., and in four-roomed dwellings 3·2 per cent.

(2) Causes of this overcrowding are the shortage of such houses and the inability of the occupiers to pay the rents required in larger houses; and the uneven distribution of the different sized families.

(3) Measures taken or contemplated for dealing with overcrowding.

Twenty-four houses have been erected by the Local Authority.

(4) No special cases of overcrowding were dealt with in 1925.

##### III. FITNESS OF HOUSES

(1) (a) General standard of housing in the area. This appears to be slightly above the average for the County and that for England and Wales generally, at the 1921 census.

(b) General character of the defects found to exist in unfit houses. The principal defect is that already mentioned viz., the position of some houses against the rock. There are also a few back to back houses, and a few in an old and dilapidated state of repair.

(c) The defects are mainly due to the position and construction of the houses, rather than to lack of proper management and supervision by the owners, or to acts of waste or neglect by tenants.

(2) General action taken as regards unfit houses under—

(a) The Public Health Acts : Some formal and a number of informal notices are given by the Sanitary Inspector and are generally promptly complied with.

(b) The Housing Acts : A certain number of houses have been closed, and where this has been possible re-conditioned by the owners and the closing order determined.

(3) Difficulties found in remedying unfitness. There is not yet a sufficient number of new houses to take the place of those which are so unfit that they would be better closed. Many of the unfit houses are so built against the rock that they cannot be freed from this defect.

(4) There is a sufficient supply of water for houses in the town.

There are still a considerable number of cases where one w.c. serves two houses.

##### IV. UNHEALTHY AREAS.

There have been no representations of unhealthy areas during the year.

##### V. BYE-LAWS relating to houses, to houses let in lodgings, and to tents, vans, sheds, etc.

(1) As to working of existing bye-laws. There is one common lodging house which is inspected and reasonably well kept.

(2) As to need for new bye-laws or revision of existing bye-laws.

##### VI. GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

The attention of the Local Authority having been drawn to the fact that there are a number of D-traps and gullies in the town, the Sanitary Inspector was instructed to make a special inspection with a view to their removal.

##### HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year:—

(a) Total, including numbers given separately under (b) ... ..	17
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :	
(i) By the Local Authority ... ..	16
(ii) By other bodies or persons ... ..	1

##### 1. Unfit Dwelling-houses.

(1) Inspection. Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... ..	940
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ... ..	30
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... ..	—
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... ..	31

##### 2. Remedy of defects without Service of formal notices.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ... ..	25
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##### 3. Action under Statutory Powers.

##### A.—Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... ..	10
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:—	
(a) By owners ... ..	10
(b) By local authority in default of owners ... ..	—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close ... ..	—

##### B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ..	6
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—	
(a) By owners ... ..	5
(b) By local authority in default of owners ... ..	—

##### C.—Proceedings under sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to making of Closing Orders ... ..	—
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ..	—
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit ... ..	3
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... ..	—
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... ..	—



# INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk Supply.—The milk produced within and brought into the Borough is generally of fair purity and wholesome in character.

(1) Action taken as to tuberculosis milk and tuberculosis cattle — None.

(2) No licenses have been granted for the sale of milk under special designations.

(3) There have been no cases of refusal or revocation of registration of retailers or of licenses for graded milk.

(4) There have been no bacteriological examinations of samples of graded or other milk.

(b) Meat.

(i) Meat Inspection.—The Sanitary Inspector attends the different slaughter-houses regularly at their times of slaughtering. All cases of disease in meat are referred to the Medical Officer of Health. Condemned meat is burnt in a furnace.

(ii) Administration of the Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924.—These regulations are on the whole carried out thoroughly, but there are stalls which do not fully comply with the regulations.

(iii) There is no public slaughterhouse.

Private slaughterhouses in use in the area:—

In 1920, In Jan. 1925, Dec 1925.		
Registered	3	3
Licensed...	8	8

(c) Other Foods.—There have been no complaints of unsound food. Bakehouses and other such premises have been systematically inspected, and are well kept.

(d) No cases of food poisoning have been reported.

(e) Sale of Food and Drugs Act.—There has been no action by the Local Authority.

## PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—INFECTIOUS DISEASES GENERALLY.

There was an outbreak of Diphtheria in the early part of 1921. Since 1921 the number of cases annually has been small. A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept by Messrs. Dighton and Smith (chemists) at the cost of the Local Authority, for the use of those who are unable themselves to afford the cost. It is promptly used by Medical men of the town.

Pneumonia cases do not appear heretofore to have been fully notified. There have been no cases of Malaria, Dysentery, French Fever, or Encephalitis Lethargica.

Enteric Fever cases have already been referred to earlier in this report.

There was one case of Enteric Fever, occurring in April. This was a girl of 14, living at 25 Mill Street. Blood tests gave a positive reaction for the Bacillus Paratyphosus B.

Blood tests of all the other members of the family proved negative, and there had been no previous illness amongst them, nor had any of them been known to suffer from Enteric Fever. The patient had not been away from home for some months, nor had anyone stayed in the house for a considerable time previously. The patient had had no meals, so far as she could recollect, away from home. The whole family drink the filtered water from the River Severn, and have done so for many years.

Pathological and Bacteriological examinations are carried out at Birmingham University. Full use is made of these facilities.

Cases of Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, and Enteric Fever are admitted to the Borough Isolation Hospital, where there is a steam disinfecter for infected bedding and clothing.

No use has been made of the Schick and Dick Tests.

No vaccinations have been performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Smallpox Preventive) Regulations 1917.

There has been no notable epidemic or outbreak of non-notifiable infectious disease. The number of deaths from Influenza in the five years was 15.

Premises exposed to infection are disinfected with formalin vapour by the Sanitary Inspector. Clothing is disinfected by steam at the Isolation Hospital.

## NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS) DURING THE YEAR 1925.

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Smallpox.....	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever.....	3	3	—
Diphtheria .....	1	1	—
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid) ...	1	1	—
Puerperal Fever .....	—	—	—
Pneumonia.....	5	—	9
Erysipelas .....	4	1	—

## TUBERCULOSIS.

New cases and mortality during 1925:—

Age Periods.	New Cases.		Deaths.	
	Pulmonary.	Non-Pulm'n'y.	Pulmonary.	Non-Pulm'n'y.
0	M.	F.	M.	F.
1	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—
20	1	—	—	—
25	1	—	2	—
35	—	4	—	2
45	1	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	—
65 & upwds	—	—	—	—
Totals	3	4	5	1

Ophthalmia Neonatorum. — No cases were notified.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

L. E. DICKSON,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

26th April 1926

## INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON SANITARY WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 1925.

Number of houses inspected	940
Number of notices sent	6
Number of notices complied with	5
Number of letters sent	10

Particulars of sanitary matters referred to in above notices, letters and interviews

Drains out of order	6
New drains...	2
Houses damp or dirty	4
Insanitary ashpit	1
Animals kept so as to be a nuisance	4
Filthy accumulations	3

Houses disinfected after—

Scarlet Fever	3
Diphtheria	1
Enteric	1
Phthisis	16
Erysipelas	1
Cancer (bedding by steam)	1
Shelters	5

Instructions left for consumptives ... 8

Number of houses made fit after closing orders ... 3

Number of houses connected to main sewer ... 17

Number of houses connected to water supply ... 17

Number of new houses built & occupied ... 17

Number of yards of new water mains... None

Number of yards of new water sewers None

Water Supply.—Conduit water has been abundant throughout the year.

Food Supply.—Has been of a very high standard.

Dairies and Cowsheds.

Number of Cowsheds on register... 18

Number of Milksellers residing in Borough ... 17

Number of Milksellers residing outside Borough ... 4

Number of Dairies on register ... 14

Number of Inspections ... 320

Slaughterhouses.—Number on register... 11

Well kept on the whole. I have only had to complain once re cleanliness.

Lodging Houses.—One only remains. No regular wayfarers are taken in.

Factories.—Number on register ... 39

Workshops.—Number on register ... 65

Bakehouses.—Number on register ... 13

All inspected systematically and found satisfactory.

ENOCH WILLIAMS,  
SANITARY INSPECTOR.



